

Dec. 21, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

It is remarkable to me how swiftly time passes. Here we are at the end of the fall semester and another calendar year, and it's amazing to me how much important work we have all accomplished together!

This fall, Creighton earned recognition from the Center for First-generation Student Success for advancing to the [first-scholars](#) phase of the First Scholars Network. Creighton was chosen based on its demonstrated commitment to advancing the outcomes of first-generation students through improving both first-generation student success initiatives and institution-wide approaches.

Our University also earned a [silver STARS rating](#) by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. The rating demonstrates our ongoing commitment to taking actions on our campuses to address climate change.

One additional note, our undergraduate spring semester classes begin Tuesday, Jan. 9. We'll kick off the semester celebrating [MLK Week at Creighton](#) with three days of events starting Wednesday, Jan. 10, with the Unity Prayer Breakfast.

In each December Provost Digest, I make it a point to share something that is special to me about the Christmas holiday. As our children are now young adults, some of the excitement and magic associated with the season has changed. However, many of our special traditions associated with Christmas have remained the same. We enjoy dinner out as a family before late church on Christmas Eve, we are an "open your presents after church on Christmas Day" family, and Santa has always just brought one present – not the brightest or the best – but wrapped in distinctly different paper, usually with some practicality (such as an ACT study manual), and a note filled with love and some advice for the year ahead. So, I encourage you to think about the traditions you have that make this time of year special for you and your families. Traditions are something you cherish and something that passes from generation to generation. May the blessings and joy of the holiday season fill you with gladness! I truly hope you have time during the break to relax, enjoy your family, reflect on all the wonderful things you have achieved over the past year, and continue the traditions – both new and old – that make your holidays special.

I have one final wish for you as we head into 2024. In the words of Mary Anne Radmacher: "May your walls know joy, may every room hold laughter, and every window open to great possibility."

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## Fernandes Receives Nebraska EPSCoR FIRST Award Grant

**Steven Fernandes, PhD**, assistant professor of computer science, design and journalism, recently received grant funding from the Nebraska EPSCoR program. [Nebraska EPSCoR FIRST Award](#) grants are intended to assist early-career faculty members in launching their research programs.

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### KETV Features McBride

KETV Newswatch 7, the local CBS affiliate, interviewed **Chad McBride, PhD**, about his ALS diagnosis and the class he teaches on relationships and communication that was inspired by the television show *This is Us*. [Watch the segment online](#).

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## Danielsen and DiLeo Featured Experts in Reuters News Story

**Sabrina Danielsen, PhD**, associate professor of sociology and director of the Kripke Center for Religion and Society, and **Daniel R. DiLeo, PhD**, associate professor and director of the Justice and Peace Studies Program, served as featured experts in the Reuters news story "[Defying Pope's calls for climate action, US Catholic bishops cling to fossil fuels](#)."

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## Villa Receives Henry Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar Award

**Eric Villa, PhD**, professor of chemistry and biochemistry, is one among eight to receive the prestigious [Henry Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar Award for 2023](#). The award recognizes the research and teaching careers of talented early-career faculty in the chemical sciences at primarily undergraduate institutions.



## CPCE Inducts 8 New Members into Honor Society

In November, the College of Professional and Continuing Education (CPCE) inducted eight new members into **Alpha Sigma Lambda** honor society during its 10th annual ceremony for adult learners. Ephiphania Tubnenimana from Malawi, one of the Jesuit Worldwide Learning students, provided an opening reflection during the virtual ceremony before being inducted herself.

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## Society of Nursing event

**Vicki Bautista, EdD**, assistant professor and assistant program director, Integrative Health and Wellness in the School of Medicine, and **Gretchen Oltman, JD, PhD**, associate professor and program director for the master's degree in organizational leadership in the CPCE, presented "Four Steps to Create Your Nursing Leadership Philosophy" during the Nebraska Collaborative of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing professional event.

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## Falke Named to *Midlands Business Journal's* 40 Under 40

The *Midlands Business Journal* named **Megan Falke, DNP, APRN, NNP-BC**, assistant professor in the College of Nursing, to its annual [40 under 40](#) list.

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## Graduate School Honors 138 During December Commencement

The Graduate School conferred 28 graduate certificates, 94 master's degrees and 16 doctoral degrees in December. One hundred graduate students were honored during the Dec. 8 commencement and hooding ceremony in the Ryan Athletic Center. The school also awarded Jessica Kennedy-Matthews, an EdD student who died unexpectedly in August, a posthumous degree, which her two nephews accepted on her behalf.



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## Vyas and Martin Start YouTube Channel

**Gargi Vyas, PhD**, assistant professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, and **Jim Martin, PhD**, associate professor and assistant director of Interdisciplinary Leadership in the College of Professional and Continuing Education (CPCE), have started a YouTube Channel called [The Leader Ship](#).



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## First Sutureless Aortic Valve Replacement

In November, **Rob Gallegos, MD, PhD, FACS, FACC**, newly appointed chief of cardiac surgery at Creighton University Medical Center-CHI Bergan Mercy and the Creighton School of Medicine, performed the first sutureless aortic valve replacement in Nebraska.

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## Weber, Real Examine Employee Model Implications on NCAA

The latest edition of *Boston University Law Review* includes an article by **David Weber, JD**, professor of law, and **Daniel Real, JD**, associate professor of law, titled [“Will the Professionalization of Student-Athletes Kill the NCAA?”](#)

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## School of Medicine Incorporates Climate Medicine into Curriculum

**Patrick Swanson, PhD**, professor in the Department of Medical Microbiology and Immunology, published a *Praxis* article in *Jesuit Higher Education* titled [“Restorative Recreation: A Medical Humanities Course Relating Nature Prescription, Avocation, and Creation Care to Human and Ecosystem Health.”](#)



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## Haneman to Appear on ‘The Floor’

**Victoria Haneman, JD, LLM**, the Frank J. Kellegher Professor of Trusts and Estates in Creighton Law, participated in a new reality game show called [“The Floor.”](#) which premieres on Fox television on Tuesday, Jan. 2.



## Johnson Edits Clinical Approaches Book

**Ronn Johnson, PhD**, professor of psychiatry and senior associate dean for diversity, inclusion and belonging in the School of Medicine, edited *First-Line Clinical Approaches with Active Duty Service Members and Veterans*, which Routledge published.

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## Bridge Offers Access to Faculty Excellence Online Programs

[Register for over 20 previous Center for Faculty Excellence program recordings](#) and materials from the fall in Bridge including: Generative AI and Chat GPT; Faculty Associates program addressing University needs; Research and Scholarship; and others. Once you register, courses appear in your personal dashboard to watch at your convenience.

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## Eno Contributes to Integrated Medical Education Newsletter

**Cassie Eno, PhD**, assistant dean of evaluation and analytics and assistant professor of medical education in the School of Medicine, recently contributed to the *Medical Ethics Advisor* newsletter article titled "[Early, Integrated Education May Prevent 'Ethical Erosion.'](#)"



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## The Trendsetters: A New Community of Practice

**The Trendsetters** offers an informal group to share interdisciplinary practices and approaches to statistics, econometrics and a wide range of quantitative research methods. The group will meet quarterly. **Gargi Vyas, PhD**, assistant professor of interdisciplinary studies in the College of Professional and Continuing Education; **Jack Taylor, PhD**, biostatistician in the biostatistical core facility in the Research and Compliance Office; and **Jim Martin, PhD**, associate professor of interdisciplinary studies in the College of Professional and Continuing Education and assistant director of both the Reinert Memorial Library and the doctoral program in interdisciplinary leadership, will facilitate. [Register](#) for the initial meeting. Contact [GargiVyas@creighton.edu](mailto:GargiVyas@creighton.edu) with questions.

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## Kelly Considers Aftermath of War on Israeli-Hamas Security

*Articles of War*, hosted by the Lieber Institute at West Point, published an op-ed by **Michael Kelly, JD**, the Sen. Allen A. Sekt Endowed Chair in Law, titled "[Israel – Hamas 2023 Symposium – Time for The Arab League and EU to Step Up on Gaza Security.](#)"

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## CIPER Announces Combined Comprehensive Event

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The Center for Interprofessional Practice, Education and Research (CIPER) announced that the Heartland Interprofessional Education Conference (HIPE) and Innovation Summit are joining forces in 2024 to create a unified and dynamic event that will redefine the landscape of interprofessional education. Details about the event in July will be shared at a later date.

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## Interprofessional Education Collaborative Updates Core Competencies

The Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) is pleased to announce the release of the updated [IPEC Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice: Version 3](#).

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## Undergraduate Research Opportunities

### Summer Undergraduate Research and Creative Project Fellowships (SURF)

Please encourage students seeking funding for research and creative projects during summer 2024 to apply for a Summer Undergraduate Research and Creative Project Fellowship (SURF)! [Applications are due Feb. 14](#).

### Call for BIG EAST Undergraduate Research Symposium Posters

Applications are due by noon Jan. 17 for the third annual BIG EAST Undergraduate Research Poster competition, scheduled for March 16 at Madison Square Garden in New York City. Five students will be selected to represent Creighton, and each will receive lodging, food, airfare and a ticket to the Big East men's basketball tournament championship game. [Undergraduate students from any college may apply](#). Please encourage your students to do so.

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Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mardell A. Wilson".

**Mardell A. Wilson, EdD, RDN**  
*Provost, Creighton University*

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